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Fifty-ninth session
Agenda items 36 and 148

Security Council
Sixtieth year

The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Identical letters dated 25 April 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to you in order to respond to the tendentious allegations and misleading information contained in the letter addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations (document A/59/781-S/2005/250).

As mentioned in our earlier letters, the most recent of which, dated 7 March 2005, was circulated as document A/59/726-S/2005/143, Israel constantly resorts to inflating ephemeral incidents and depicting hypotheses that are borne out neither by logic nor by the facts.

The Syrian Arab Republic wishes to emphasize that the infiltration referred to in the Israeli letter was an isolated, individual incident devoid of further dimensions. Indeed, it is Syria that has respected international law and its commitments under the Disengagement Agreement signed in 1974, whereas Israel, which has occupied the Syrian Golan since 1967, has continued to practise State terrorism and committed numerous violations of the Disengagement Agreement. The most recent of these were its air strike against the Syrian village of Ain al-Sahib on 5 October 2003 and its deliberate killing of a Syrian soldier and wounding and kidnapping of another on 8 January 2003.

The occupied Syrian Golan is part of Syrian territory and a natural geographic extension of the Syrian motherland, and on both sides of it there live Syrian Arab nationals belonging to the same families. That being the situation, it is unavoidable that such incidents should occur. Similar incidents have occurred in the past, whereupon the Israeli authorities have turned over the nationals in question to the Syrian authorities. The latest incident, involving a Palestinian national, is a passing occurrence, especially in view of the fact that he was carrying an ordinary hunting rifle which could not be used to commit the act alleged in the Israeli letter.

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As for the allegation contained in that letter regarding the efforts being engaged in by Israel to renew the peace process, nothing could be further from the truth. Such claims are in conflict with the statements openly made by Israeli officials, in which they reject the resumption of the peace process and reaffirm their desire for continued control of the occupied Arab territories.

The Syrian Arab Republic renews its appeal to the international community to pay attention to Israeli colonialist and expansionist policies and the need to call a halt to those policies, which pose a threat to regional and world peace. Syria also reiterates its firm desire and strong will towards achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region, founded on the United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference and the Arab peace initiative adopted at the Beirut Summit in 2002.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36 and 148, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fayssal **Mekdad**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/59/793

General Assembly

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Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 108
Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Possibility of operating guided tours, bookstores and gift shops at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the cost implications thereof

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

In response to the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 4 of its resolution 58/263 of 23 December 2003 and following a review of location of premises for all non-essential operations as part of ensuring compliance with the Headquarters Minimum Operating Security Standards, the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) has undertaken a feasibility study for the operation of guided tours, gift shops and other activities on UNON premises, aimed at promoting the image of the United Nations.

The study indicated the possibility of a resumption, in the year 2007, of activities of the United Nations gift shop, previously closed for security reasons, and of the UNICEF card stand at the off-site building for UNON commercial operations, which will be part of the measures for the strengthening of the security of the UNON compound.

Regarding the guided tours, it has been determined that given the limited number of tourists anticipated, the costs of operating a visitors' service would significantly exceed the potential revenue from the sale of tickets to visitors, requiring consistent subsidies to cover its financial deficit. On this basis, the Secretary-General recommends against operating guided tours at the UNON premises.

The General Assembly may wish to take note of the present report.

* The present report is being issued following completion of the feasibility study on the subject, as indicated in document A/58/727.

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1. By paragraph 4 of its resolution 58/263 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at the second part of its resumed fifty-eighth session on the possibility of operating guided tours, bookstores and gift shops at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) and the cost implications thereof. In his note to the Assembly dated 3 March 2004 (A/58/727), the Secretary-General advised the Assembly that, given the ongoing review of UNON compliance with the Headquarters Minimum Operating Security Standards, he would submit the requested report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

2. At present, UNON operates the United Nations gift shop as part of its commercial operations located within the security boundaries of the UNON compound. The location of these operations was recently reviewed in the context of compliance of the compound with Headquarters Minimum Operating Security Standards. The review indicated the need for relocation of all commercial operations outside the compound perimeter. In the interim, the gift shop was temporarily closed for security reasons.

3. By its resolution 59/276, section XI, of 23 December 2004, the General Assembly approved funds for UNON for the construction of a new off-site building to accommodate UNON commercial operations. The United Nations gift shop will also be relocated to that building. The new structure, currently at the architectural design phase, will be located outside the main security perimeter. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2006.

4. In the context of the feasibility study undertaken in compliance with resolution 58/263, UNON reviewed the profile of the gift shop and identified measures to focus its activities on the sale of United Nations branded items to be produced in the host country. It is also foreseen that the gift shop will expand its activities to include the sale of books and United Nations publications.

5. As in the past, it is envisaged that the gift shop will operate as a self-sustained commercial operation, run on a full cost-recovery basis, involving no programme budget resources for its financing and not accruing income for the Organization.

6. The possibility of operating guided tours for visitors was also reviewed in the context of the feasibility study. One conclusion of the study was that the UNON compound lacks those landmark features which characterize the United Nations compounds in New York and Geneva. Its artefacts collection, donated by Member States, is significantly smaller than the collections on exhibit at United Nations premises in New York and Geneva. These factors would diminish the attractiveness of the UNON compound for visitors. It is also anticipated that such activities would be insignificant in volume, in view of the limited number of visitors, mostly tourists from the host city, anticipated. Should the guided tours be organized, they would be limited, for security reasons, to United Nations exhibitions organized at the United Nations Library premises in the UNON complex. The guided tours could be organized in English and Swahili. That would require the establishment of several positions of tour guides as well as a capacity for the sale of tickets and supervision of the operation. The organizational structure for the guided tours would need to be supported by funds to cover the cost of the acquisition of projectors, video, television and other equipment, the preparation, deployment and periodic replacement of exhibit panels along the routes, as well as funds for promotional activities and operational costs.

7. As it will be recalled from financial data on the operations of the visitor services at Headquarters, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna, these activities historically operate on a financial deficit basis. That deficit for the biennium 2002-2003 at Headquarters comprised $1.9 million and represented 42 per cent of total generated revenues; at Geneva, it comprised a deficit of $0.8 million, or 108 per cent of biennial revenues, and at Vienna it comprised $0.5 million, or 379 per cent of biennial revenues. A similar performance was reported by those visitors' services in 2004. Bearing in mind the financial performance of visitors' services in those three main locations, it is anticipated, for the reasons given in paragraph 6 above, that the visitors' services at Nairobi would result in a financial loss for the Organization in an amount from $200,000 to $250,000 on a biennial basis.

8. Based on the financial considerations and bearing in mind the anticipated limited scope of such services at UNON, the establishment of the guided tours operation at UNON is not recommended.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. **Following the anticipated completion, in 2006, of the off-site building for the UNON commercial operations, the United Nations gift shop and other similar operations will be relocated to that building and resume their activities. The profile of the gift shop will be expanded to include the sale of United Nations branded items to be produced in the host country, as well as the sale of books and United Nations publications. This will be implemented on a full cost-recovery basis with no financial implications for the United Nations programme budget.**

10. **For the reasons given in paragraphs 6 and 7 above, it is anticipated that the operation of guided tours at UNON would be limited in scope and conducted within the premises of the United Nations Library of UNON. Furthermore, on the basis of experience of the visitors' services at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna, it is likely that the UNON operation would also result in a financial deficit for the Organization. Based on the foregoing considerations, the establishment of the guided tours operation at UNON is not recommended.**

11. **The General Assembly may wish to take note of the present report.**

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Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 123
Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Review of the management structure of all peacekeeping operations

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in its decision 59/507 of 29 October 2004, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at the second part of its resumed fifty-ninth session a report on the review of the management structure of all peacekeeping operations, inter alia, through administrative comparisons, as appropriate, taking into account the complexities, mandates and specificities of each operation and the necessity of carrying out effectively and efficiently each operation.

2. The Secretariat regrets that it is unable to provide the report requested by the General Assembly for consideration during the second part of the resumed fifty-ninth session. The requested report will require the collection of data on mission staffing as well as an in-depth review of the management structures of 17 peacekeeping missions and at least two special political missions, and a detailed analysis of the commonalities and variations of structures and levels in all of the operations, taking into account a number of factors, including the differences in mandate, size, concept of operations and mission environment. The Secretariat is currently in the process of reconciling the staffing tables of all peacekeeping missions and consolidating data on staffing and organizational structures that are critical elements in the analysis required to produce the report. In addition, owing to the ongoing surge in planning and deployment of new peacekeeping missions, limited resources have been available to produce a credible report in the time allocated. Once the data collection is completed, the comprehensive review and analysis of the management structure of peacekeeping operations will be undertaken.

3. The Secretary-General will submit the requested report on the management structure of peacekeeping operations for consideration by the General Assembly at the second part of its resumed sixtieth session.

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Agenda item 123
Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Feasibility of consolidating the accounts of the various peacekeeping operations

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The present note is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/319, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive report on the feasibility of consolidating the accounts of the various peacekeeping operations, including a simulation of the proposed options.

2. The Secretary-General regrets that, owing to the unprecedented surge in peacekeeping operations, the Secretariat has not been in a position to dedicate the necessary resources to the preparation of the report. In addition, further analysis is required to consider the efficiency aspects of streamlining the processes for the financing of peacekeeping operations and at the same time permitting more consistent and timely reimbursement to troop-contributing Governments, in the context of the Secretary-General's proposals on reform.

3. The Secretary-General intends to submit the report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

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